

## Literary Notes.

## "Poor Little Mary MacLane."

When H. S. Stone & Co., the Chicago publishers, had the temerity to send out into the world "The Story of Mary MacLane," they took a long chance with the discriminating public, which in a great part of its make up is decent, and which considers the above house reputable. It may be a money maker, but it will react like a sensational newspaper story. The paper might sell for the time being, but in the future, when people began to think, there'd be little doing. This girl who "hates virtue," and loves to say rotten and unquotable things, seems to have written her so-called philosophy to get an outlet for base passions, which some people might imagine, but which no woman would say. "She is interesting," "She is puzzling," "Is she a genius?" "Is she insane?"—these are some of the headlines about the girl whose life belies her talk, and whose book is on the market to make you gasp.

Here is a select line or two:

"Often I walk out to a place on the flat valley below the town, to flirt with Death. There is within me a latent spirit of coquetry, it appears.

"Down on the flat there is a certain deep, dark hole, with several feet of water at the bottom.

"I go there sometimes in the early evening, and kneel on the edge of it and lean over the dark pit, with my hand grasping a wooden stake that is driven into the ground near by. And I drop little stones down and hear them splash hollowly, and it sounds a long way off.

"There is something wonderfully soothing, wonderfully comforting to my unrestful, aching wooden heart in the dark mystery of this fascinating hole. Here is the End for me, if I want it—here is the Ceasing, when I want it. And I lean over and smile quietly.

"No flowers," I say softly to myself, 'no weeping idiots, no senseless funeral, no oily undertaker's fussing over my woman's body, no useless Christian prayers. Nothing but this deep, dark, restful grave.' \* \* \*

"There are several things in the world for which I, of womankind and 19 years, have conceived a forcible repugnance—or, rather, the feeling was born in me; I did not have to conceive it.

"Often my mind chants a fervent litany of its own that runs somewhat like this:

"From women and men who dispense odors of musk; from little boys with long curls; from the kind of people who call a woman's figure her 'shape'—kind devil, deliver me.

"From all sweet girls; from 'gentlemen,' from feminine men—kind devil, deliver me.

"From lisle-thread stockings; from round, tight garters; from brilliant brass belts—kind devil, deliver me.

"From insipid sweet wine; from men who wear mustaches; from the sort of people that call legs 'limbs'; from bedraggled white petticoats—kind devil, deliver me.

"Kind devil, if you are not to fetch me happiness, then slip off from your great steel key-ring a bright little key to the door of the glittering, gleaming bad things, and give it me, and show me the way, and wish me joy.

"I would like to live about seven years of judicious badness, and then death, if you will. Nineteen years of damnable nothingness, seven years of judicious badness—and then death. A noble ambition! But might it not be worse? If not that, then nineteen years of damnable nothingness, and then death. No; when the lead is in the sky that does not appeal to

me. My versatile mind turns to the seven years of judicious badness."

And later Mary declares her love. She says:

"Periodically I fall completely, madly in love with the Devil. He is so fascinating, so strong—so strong, exactly the sort of a man whom my wooden heart awaits. I would like to throw myself at his head. I would make him a dear little wife. He would love me, he would love me. I would be in raptures. And I would love him, oh, madly, madly!

"What would you have me do, little MacLane?" the Devil would say.

"I would have you conquer me," crush me, know me, I would answer.

"What shall I say to you?" the Devil would ask.

"Say to me, 'I love you, I love you, I love you,' in strong, steel, fascinating voice. Say it to me often, always—a million times."

"What would you have me do, little MacLane?" he would say again.

"I would answer:—'Hurt me, burn me, consume me with hot love, shake me violently, embrace me hard, hard in your strong, steel arms; kiss me with wonderful, burning kisses—press your lips to mine with passion, and your soul and mine would meet them in an anguish of joy for ...

"I live in a house with people who affect me mostly through their tooth brushes—and those I should like, above all things, to gather up and pitch out of the bathroom window—and oh, damn them, damn them!

"You who read this, can you understand the depth of bitterness and hatred that is contained in this for me? Perhaps you can a little, if you are a woman and have felt yourself alone.

"When I look at the six tooth brushes a fierce, lurid storm of rage and passion comes over me. Two heavy, leaden hands lay hold of my life and press, press, press. They strike the sick, sick, weariness to my inmost soul."

And now comes a note of warning from the Inter-Mountain in Butte. It swears that this Marie Bashkirtseff of the west will write another book, but the advance sheets look suspiciously like the sporting editor. They run:

"I found the Devil.

"He was sitting on a large rock overlooking the housetops of Butte.

"He did not see me coming.

"So I found him!

"I said to him: 'I am poor little Mary MacLane!'

"He said: 'I am so sorry!'

"I do not know what he meant by the remark. I do not care.

"I sat down by his side and I held fast, fast to his hand.

"It was a hot hand.

"It was hotter than my flush.

SOME MORE GRAY DAWN.

"I said: 'I have been looking for you, Devil. I have been out in the red, red sunset. I have been out in the cold, cold dawning searching for you.'

"He said: 'I know it!'

"There was sadness in his voice.

"He said: 'What would you have me do?'

"I said: 'Smother, scorch, burn, blister, me with love!'

"He stared at me and said: 'Dope!'

"I said: 'Damn!'

"I threw my arms around him. I drew him close. I pressed my lips to his.

"I knew I had found my Happiness.

"I do not know what he had found.

"Perhaps it was his Hell!

"We sat together. The sun hid his face.

"Who can blame the sun?

"Into the west came the red of the sunset. My red sunset."

"Bits of Broken China," by William E. S. Fales; illustrated; 75 cents. (New York: Street & Smith.)

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